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The Purple Poets

VOLUME ONE

Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori—

HORACE, *Odes*.



EDWARD V. KILLEEN, JR.

THE VERSE
OF
EDWARD V. KILLEEN, JR.

EDITED BY
THE HOLY CROSS PURPLE STAFF



THE HOLY CROSS PURPLE
WORCESTER, MASS.
YEAR OF SILVER JUBILEE
MCMXIX

For sale
255-119
1919

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THE HEFFERNAN PRESS

Spencer, Mass.

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Editor's Foreword

The two-fold end that the HOLY CROSS PURPLE has in publishing this edition of Killeen's verse is the honor of the dead poet's beloved memory and the greater glory of Holy Cross. It thought that Holy Cross, sponsor as she is of one of the foremost student-magazines in the country, could preserve for the eyes of coming generations the choicer pages of that magazine, with assurance of naught but honor therefrom. Manifestly, a monthly was not the proper means for this perpetuation: a book was called for.

Therefore, THE PURPLE presents to you, reader, in this year of its Silver Jubilee, Volume First of the series "The Purple Poets." It is the college-verse of a college-poet of the metal from which Joyce Kilmer, Alan Seegar and Rupert Brooke were moulded.

The enterprise is a beginning, and a beginning which, we hope, will establish as a custom Holy Cross' publishing of Holy Cross authors — "for the glory of Holy Cross."

JOHN FALLON.

A Tribute

AMONG the many sorrows come of late to Alma Mater in the passing of beloved Alumni and equally beloved sons still under her fond tutelage, we pause to record the death of Edward Vincent Killeen, Jr., of the Class of Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen. Keenly, indeed, does this sad news fall on our afflicted hearts and keenly, too, will it bow down the heads of those Holy Cross men in the service who come to hear of it. Edward, too, as they, was absent in the service, attached to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Illinois, when pneumonia took him off, all too early, and too suddenly. Surely his death will bring to his former fellow-students, at home and abroad, an especial response of grief. He had gone to the Navy early in September and at the time of his death, Sunday, October sixth, was arranging for a transfer to the Naval unit of his beloved college. His death honors him with a gold star in our illustrious service flag.

Edward Vincent Killeen, Jr., came into our midst in the fall of 1915, and at once won the attention and devotion of all his classmates and upperclass men by his literary and musical talents, his ability at tennis, and above all by the geniality and cheerfulness of heart and a nobility of soul. Gifted with natural blessings and well fitted for college at Brooklyn Preparatory, he soon ranked high in his classes; and, since at Prep.

he had evinced a marked talent for writing and conducted a literary enterprise of no mean pretenses, he found early entrée into the pages of THE HOLY CROSS PURPLE — an enviable accomplishment in a college man's career. At the close of his Freshman year he was appointed to its board of associate editors. Violin skill, too, was his, and he played first violin in the college orchestra during his three years at Holy Cross. Doubtless, it was his love of music as well as his knowledge of its comfort for the sick, to say nothing of his thoughtfulness and his devotion, likewise, to his own St. Vincent, that prompted him so often to play for the invalids and sick at St. Vincent's Hospital, Worcester. At tennis Ed. represented the college many times in her intercollegiate contests, won his letters, and loomed large as a logical candidate for captain in his senior year. These assets, added to those of his unselfishness, good cheer and uprightness made him popular from the very outset, but to none, perhaps, did his true self shine out more clearly than to those who dealt with him in the destinies of THE PURPLE. His pride and joy over other men's success in winning their way into print were as great as over his own similar achievement, and encouragement to others in this line of writing came easy to him. Who of the privileged few to sit around the Editors' table in the Sanctum for the monthly meeting and luncheon can forget his contribution to the entertainment on such jovial occasions? The party and fun were instinct with him and often all averred a preference for his presence to any other manner of indulging the feast of reason and flow of soul of such literary and festive reunions. Truly, his going is a great blow to all and particularly to literary Holy Cross.

It is hoped that some day, not far distant, a fitting tribute may be paid to the memory and the talents of the loving and lovable Ed. Killeen. Had he returned to college he would have been the editor-in-chief of the magazine he served so faithfully in the three years of his residence on the Hill of Pleasant Springs. His was a rare gift of poetry and verse and even thus early he had won public recognition by a place in the issues of "The Poets of the Future," for 1915-16, 1916-17, and 1917-18. His war poems alone merit embodiment in any anthology of amateur, aye, even professional war-verse, whilst many of his utterances fall on our ears with a strange significance now in the light of the aftermath. Were they prophecies or symbols or mere coincident utterances, those lines from his last published verse, "Via Crucis:"

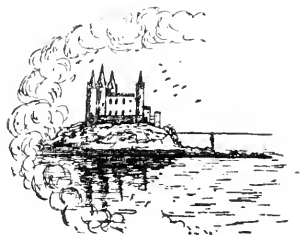
"A lad and yet he fights full well. What zest
Must kindle in his heart to stir him so."

* * *

"It seems not fair in death his cheek sha'n't glow."

We are writing in the quiet of this sombre Autumn afternoon and a letter sent to Edward V. Killeen, Jr., on the seventh day of this October lies open before us. It is from the publishers of "The Poets of the Future," and informs our youthful writer that his poem, "A Forgotten Birthday," has been chosen to adorn the pages of the college anthology for 1917-1918. That little bit of biographic verse appeared in the pages of *THE PURPLE* for October, 1917, and today, less than a year from that time, its author lies cold in death in the home of his bereaved parents in the month of his twenty-first birthday, October the twenty-eighth — another forgotten birthday, indeed; for Death was too

forgetful, too oblivious of him and us and his beloved ones at home in claiming him before that day, before many birthdays, for many, many years. Certainly, "Death was full urgent with thee," Edward, but in honor you met it bravely, candidly, holily, as a true, courageous, Catholic poet-patriot. May the day of your death be the day of your birth in our hearts forever. May your good soul rest in peace! — *The Holy Cross Purple, October, 1918.*



Edward Vincent Killeen Jr.,

"It seems not fair in death his cheeks sha'n't glow."



HERE is no better expression of the spirit which prompted the publication of these poems than the above, the last written words of the youthful poet. When the grief consequent upon his sudden death had given place to calm reflection, the idea of a complete and permanent edition of his poetry suggested itself as the tribute most befitting his memory. The result is the present collection of verse; from his earliest down to and including his last finished piece, the "Via Crucis."

It would indeed be difficult to enter upon an appreciation of his poetry without first making some mention of the poet himself. Known and loved by all at Holy Cross, Ed. had a gifted personality. His was a many sided talent which displayed itself to full advantage in as many diverse forms as poetry, music, and tennis. His, too, a keen sense of humor well above the ordinary. Combined with these qualities of mind, he likewise possessed a certain amiability of character, a loftiness of aim and purpose that stamped him as one among many. Truly, and with just reason, he merited the admiration of all.

It is, though, with his poetry that we are most concerned, for as a poet he was best known and loved. About his verse there was always manifest a spontan-

eity both of thought and expression. He sang from the fulness of his heart. His themes were ever simple; a summer scene or autumn idyll. These he treated delicately with a touch that showed real poetic worth. The vivid personification, direct simplicity, and colorful imagery of the poem on "Autumn" is but one instance. It was this poem that marked his debut in the pages of *THE PURPLE*.

Among other such nature poems, is the "Flight of Summer" which combined novelty of thought with clearness of expression. Indeed, what more striking example of imaginative quality could be deduced than the lines:

"And now she stopped to swiftly sip the crystal wine
Of some enchanted fountain hidden in a vale;
But as I neared with laughing eyes behind a vine
She'd lurk, then slip away and leave a hopeless trail."

It is strongly characteristic of Killeen that in many poems he gave evidence of deep filial devotion. This trait alone is rare, yet welcome and pleasing in one whose days were spent away from the home fireside. Like that other poet hero, Joyce Kilmer, he displays unconsciously his thought and consideration for others. Like that other, too, he finds in childhood a happy theme; as on the occasion of his sister's fourth birthday. Apart from the sentiment contained, "To Clare, Candle Wishes" has all the qualities most desirable in such verse: graphic representation in words forcefully concrete both of sincere thought and true emotion. Small wonder that it was chosen to grace the pages of "The Poets of the Future: A College Anthology for 1916-1917."

The one feature frequently too evident in lyric poetry but least prominent in Killeen's verse is gloomy

introspection. He looked out fearlessly on the world, rather than inwardly on his own thoughts. It was well, perhaps, both for himself and his art. Mystic poets are seldom popular and with these Killeen held no brief. Still, such was his skillful adaptation to changing impressions that it did not entirely preclude sane reflection on things of the soul. For the full truth of this, we must turn to the sonnet "By the Strand." There we find a certain gravity of thought, begotten not from a knowledge of matters temporal, but eternal; there, also, an inkling, then unseen to him, of his own fate.

Not least in merit among such revelations of his spiritual nature are the war poems; more especially the last. Somehow, the "Via Crucis" is shot through and through with pathos; perhaps because it admits application to his own heroic death. It were hard indeed to recall the touching lines

"A lad, and yet he fights full well. What zest
Must kindle in his heart to stir him so!"

without arousing some memory of the great sacrifice he made. For those who loved him, no less than for such as knew him only through his verse there is consolation in the thought that he died, as they say the swan does, singing gaily. What brilliant promise he gave of future success in his art! What songs might we have still heard from him; songs that came freely and gladly from the heart with all the hope and vigor of youth! There now remains only the promise seen in all he had written. Yet, the promise and his finished verse are the most lasting memorials of one who gave all in freedom's cause.

JOHN N. STANISLAUS.

You've Gone Old Friend

(To E. V. K., Jr.)

THEY say, old friend, you've gone.
The tumult of the winds, tonight, is softer;
Tall lindens know and mourn;
Long corridors are still,
And silence like a snow broods o'er the hill,
For we have heard the last note of your
laughter.

Oh they will make your grave
Where fellow-bards will give the skills that brand
them
To building poems brave
Upon your great, great heart:
Tombéd here, your epitaph would need no art —
Just "Ed" and all the Hill would understand them.

JOHN FALLON.

Memories

(To Edward V. Killeen, Jr.)

DEAR days at Holy Cross, dear golden days,
That have no like in story! O my heart
Yearns oft for you in his red pulsing ways,
And all thy blithesome hours
In redolent showers
Come back in dreams too sweet for my poor art.

Oh, my dumb lute can strike no lofty strain,
And such are these — my lingering roseate dreams,
Wild notes of heaven, if in that glad domain
Sweet-toned, melodic choirs
Inflame the lyric lyres
With golden-tongued, mellifluous themes.

Now I have but their ashes, cold and dead,
Upon the weary hearthstone of my days;
And here my soul must find a restless bed
Amid sad threnodies
Of Death's deep mysteries
Till morn wings out upon her dewy ways.

O could I fill the present with the past,
Then I had some incentive to endure
Thru' those dark hours I know must yet outlast
When other moons have shown
And gleamed, and died, and gone —
Or find forgetfulness my solitary cure.

The full sun rains a stream of silver tears
That heavy lie where they had danced before;
And night rings all the heartaches of the years
To my embattered heart,
Whence joy must ever part,
And sorrow stand relentless at the door.

JAMES J. TENNYSON, '19.

THESE POEMS ARE FROM THE PAGES
OF *THE HOLY CROSS PURPLE*
MCMXV — MCMXVIII

Autumn

AN ARTIST fair, bedecked and gay,
Her tresses breathing of sachet,
And golden-rod around her twined,
Came down the path with poppies lined.

Her lips were tinted apple-red,
Her eyes were like the vault o'erhead,
And cheeks of richest berry-brown
Were softer than the peach's down.

"Good morning, sir," she smiled to me
And dropped a pretty courtesy.
"Pray tell me would you care to stray
With me o'er hill and dale today?"

I answered yes; so forth we went,
And as she walked her steps scarce bent
The dainty blades which 'neath her feet
Most shyly bowed in mien discreet.

In dress of crimson gay and bright,
She painted trees and shrubs aright;
With golden flame she seared the hills
And splashed with blue the dancing rills.

Her skillful brush all day she plied,
But when the shades of eventide
Had matched the gray of crags and rocks,
Reluctantly she closed her box.

At length as homeward bound we strolled,
My curiosity grew bold,
"What may I call thee, pretty maid?"
"My name is Autumn, sir," she said.

A Halloween Party

A WEESOME pixie, bright of eye,
With cunning smile and manner sly,
Flits lightly off a golden ray,
Which links the sun and dying day.

"My fairy queen appointed me
To bid thee join in revelry
With us tonight in Moonbeam Glen,
'Neath Druid Oak, on stroke of ten."

His message scarce delivered, than
He leaps upon the fading span;
Then gentle hands untie the thread,
And put the toil-flushed sun to bed.

The evening is a fairest one,
Bejeweled with stars; so, will I shun
A chance to live again and play
Where fancy's sceptre dear held sway?

A broomstick witch, an omen dread,
On darksome steed rides o'er my head.
She stops anon to stroke and pat
With shriveled hand, a favored cat.

A grinning Jack o' Lantern bold
Is passed with awe, then I behold
A gaily dancing fairy folk,
In wild abandon, 'neath the oak.

They mount the moonbeams to the moon,
And dance their course to fairy tune,
Whilst sprinkling silver-dust aloft,
To make the highway fair and soft.

Then one by one they leap afar
Into the night. A falling star
In living light enflames the skies,
Then droops and fades and finally dies.

I sit and listen all in vain,
For they will ne'er return again
And dance once more that moonlit scene,
The fairy feast at Hallowe'en.

A Christmas Gift

ON CHRISTMAS Eve an angel fair
Rejoicing earthward flew, and there
He left a parcel fashioned queer,
A Christmas present of good cheer.

And on a place where all could see
Was written this divine decree:
"A Christmas gift, for seven days
To be concealed from mortal gaze."

For just one week the package lay,
From prying mankind stowed away,
And then 'twas opened and they spied
A baby year, eyes opened wide.

By the Strand

A LONELY boatsman strolling down a beach,
Enwrapt in thoughts afar, of wavelet's play
Unmindful, stares into the sullen gray,
Which cloaks the sea as far as eye can reach.

Mayhap he thinks what will the morrow teach:
The ocean wreathed with bright and dancing spray,
Or, lashed to fury, drawn in dread array
To suck him down within its yawning breach?

Likewise am I a stroller on the sands
Of life. The ocean of eternity
Is lapping softly mine and other strands
Where other strollers stroll. And I shall see
On some uncertain day its throttling hands
Or feel its loving touch caressing me.

*Idols

WHEN I, a tiny little chap,
Had wearied of my childish play,
My mother called me to her lap;
And in a mother's loving way
She ran her fingers through my hair
And pressed me closer to her heart,
Then softly asked if I'd take care
Of her when old, or would we part.

I clenched my baby hands and swore
That o'er my ship as queen she'd reign,
And both like Captain Kidd of yore
We'd terrorize the Spanish Main.
She kissed away my gallant vow,
And whilst she tucked me safe abed
A great round tear fell on my brow,
In truth unlike a pirate maid.

Ill-fated was my bandit bold,
Unnoticed slipped he to the rear,
To yield the fame of stolen gold
Before the gallant engineer,
Who drove the mighty steel express
Along the shining, singing rail
And waved his hand in mute address,
To fade away in smoky trail.

So thus the years in passing by
Brought fancied heroes great and small,
Each one to emulate I'd try;
The fireman, the knight, they all
Have one time lived and had their day,
And each shared honors with the best,
Then bid farewell, and stole away
To take his place amongst the rest.

Upon the hazy shelves of time,
Beneath a shroud of ancient dust,
Stand boyhood's idols once sublime,
Neglected now, below the crust
Of pleasure's whim and present joys;
And ever apt to break out through
Just like unto discarded toys
When new ones lose their novel hue.

*This poem was published in "The Poets of the Future" for 1915-1916.

Lost Thoughts

BESIDE the trout stream may I sit once more
To listen while the talking waters foam,
And let my fancy steal from me, to roam
Again the fields of yesterday; to soar
Where mid the whispering trees with clever lore
The songsters of the woodlands build their home;
To delve the depths of some dank cavern's gloam
And search the wonders of its hidden store.

But they are ghosts. My fancy may not stroll,
Unfettered like a carefree child at play,
In quest of rainbow gold or silver moon.
For Time, the lotus flower of the soul,
We taste, and then our thoughts are led away,
Drawn on by some Pied Piper's graceful tune.

The Flight of Summer

I SPIED one day across the billowed summer field
A winsome maiden shy and young. She lightly fled
When I drew nigh, and sought escape where wood-
nymphs shield
Their sylvan flowerlings beneath a leafy spread.

In vain pursuit I followed, seeing everywhere
The gentle hand of Summer archly beckoning me,
And feeling hot, sweet breaths of Summer in the air
Or hearing Summer's endless whispering o'er the lea.

And madly thus the chase fared on through brook and wood,
Through meadowland where husks of waving gilded corn
Had caught her silken tresses seeking if they could
But stay the flight of Summer lightly onward borne.

And now she stopped to swiftly sip the crystal wine
Of some enchanted fountain hidden in the vale;
But as I neared, with laughing eyes behind a vine
She'd lurk, then slip away and leave a hopeless trail,

Until at last she stayed her flight upon a rock,
And as I looked I saw the change. My summer maid
Of yesterday a matron was, each burnished lock
And golden strand was woven in a chestnut braid.

The lassie Summer fled, and in her place there came
A gentlewoman, with Autumn for her name.

In Memoriam

(To Thos. P. McCue, '19, drowned in saving two lives.)

A WELL-PLACED loving word, a tender thought,
Are little seeds that catch and slowly grow
Within the souls of fellowmen, although
The planter ne'er may view what he hath wrought.
And should the world forget the man who sought
To cheer his brother, there remains to show
The seedling nourished by the afterflow
Of years, to prove a lesson so well taught.

To us a young and gentle sower came
And planted in his comrades' hearts a seed;
Then at his heavenly Father's whispered claim
He bravely left, our cause above to plead.
Not his a portion of immortal fame,
The love of fellowmen shall be his meed.

U. C. La F ———

(On his Sonnet in "The Harvard Monthly," October, 1916.)

WHAT is this Heaven, then? Is it the pay
Accorded each unthinking clod? Ah, no!
But rather harvest of the seed we sow,
The reaping of eternal love, the way
Of Father with the child. Thus if each day
We strive our love for fellowmen to show,
And seek not for reward, then why not so
With God who more deserves our love than they?

"There is no Heaven, no future, all is past."
Be not the soul to voice this empty vaunt
Lest in the balance of eternity
The words shall weigh you down. Forever cast
From God, the echoes shall return to taunt
Your helpless soul with lasting mockery.

A Christmas Song

THE whispered song sung to the rose
By rose-leaves where the wild wind blows,
Must perish with the summer breath,
Forgotten in the rose-leaf's death.

I know a song, a silver strain,
Filling the world with love's refrain,
Sung in the wild wind's hurried flight,
Sung through the clear December night:
Of peace on earth, good will to men,
Of Christmas long ago, and then
The humble manger with the Child,
The Virgin Mother meek and mild;
Sung to the trees who forward bend
To catch each word until the end.
The winter sea, the storm-swept sail,
The hillside bare, the lonesome dale,
Are gladdened by the night wind's song
As in his flight he sweeps along.

Unlike the song the rose-leaf sings,
'Twill never die as earthly things,
But with the sweetness of the rose,
Each passing season stronger grows.

Poets Unsung

"Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest."

THROUGH life's strange vale, the changing world of men,
Lone roses bloom, and lovely perfumes spread;
Enchanting all within that garden glen,
They bloom, then fade, to lie forgotten, dead.

But here and there the fickle hand of fame
May find some modest blossom ere it die,
And pluck the drooping stem, although the same
Sweet fragrances in other roses lie.

These flowers in the tome of time shall rest;
And to the soul of man each one appears
A book-mark bright whose living charm was pressed
Into the musty scent of printed years.

What think ye of the other roses whom
The touch of fame in passing by may spare?
Too soon, a poet's grave, no more they'll bloom —
The mouldered dust of ages is their share.

That bud matured to beauty not quite blown
Has blighted been, and in a pink-white cell
The captive fragrance dies. That rose has grown
Too shyly in the clustered leafy dell.

And thus a host of others just as rare,
And just as sweet, their perfume on the air
May lavish, still the erring hand of fame
Will onward pass and shall the neighbor claim.

Charity

(To "Auto Da Fé," November "Williams Literary Monthly.")

NO pious eyes speed on thy soul to Hell,
But pious hands reach forth to save it,
To bring the soul to God who gave it
And do the work that charity may tell.

But if thy winged mind, with freedom shammed,
Must hasten on in headlong flight,
Refusing aid, not wishing sight,
Why then and only then wilt thou be damned.

'Tis not the Christian charity that speaks
And calls his neighbor's faith unseeing,
Who follows a belief decreeing
Whatever charity and justice seeks.

Because your neighbor 'neath the dust may find
"In sixty volumes" truth revealed,
That truth which is from you concealed,
In charity then do not call him blind.

And though to you those volumes mould away;
Have care! the Judgment Book will not decay.

For a Wedding Anniversary

(Dedicated to his parents.)

TWAIN birdlings, love and song full grown
 Beneath each feathered breast,
 Their first sweet dwelling built
 And tuned the season to their lilt,
When summer birds had erstwhile flown
 Their little nest.

The days have fled across the hills,
 Yet every year in quest
 The birds return awhile
 And once again the hillsides smile:
A fleet and haunting memory fills
 Their little nest.

Today once more they softly call,
 A longer while they rest,
 The precious moments spent,
 They must away. Ah! what content
To dwell in memories' golden hall—
 Their little nest!

*To Clare, Candle-Wishes

(To his sister on her fourth birthday.)

A BIRTHDAY cake with tapers bright,
That wink like little eyes.
A tiny maid in pink and white,
A tableau of surprise.

* * *

And now to blow the candles out,
A wish for every one,
You laugh and with a merry shout
The game is well begun.

First father's candle you must blow;
It flickers, soon is still,
And daddy hopes you'll never know
The slightest care or ill.

Then mother next, her candle brings —
With skill a mother shows —
A choice array of pretty things
Like baby frocks and clothes.

And "sister dear," let's blow and see
Her birthday wish for you;
A mighty puff and — goodness me!
You've blown my candle, too.

Her prayer's a most romantic sort,
For, by the hearthside glow,
She'd have a knight to pay you court,
A Cinderella beau.

And how you try to make me tell
With all your baby guile;
The others, sweetheart, wished so well
I think I'll wait a while.

* * *

Now weary from the happy day
In mother's arms you rest,
A fairer jewel never lay
Upon her loving breast.

Two chubby hands have clasped her heart,
Entwined, until it seems
You cannot bear to let her part,
Not even in your dreams.

But sleep untroubled, little miss,
For if my prayer come true,
You'll always have her tender kiss:
My candle-wish to you.

*This poem was published in "The Poets of the Future"
for 1916-1917.

Maying-Time

COME! hand in hand we'll a-Maying fare
And hearken to the wanton magic strain;
The melody of youth is on the air
And I would live my Maytime once again.

The fleeting days of youth are mystic gems
That gleam and sparkle in the shrine of May,
And he, who counts them lost when spent, condemns
His soul no more in fancy-fields to play.

He crowds his spirit in a dungeon drear
Who hampers it with useless age and care.
The May today reflects the yesteryear;
So come, I prithee, let's a-Maying fare.

My Brother in Gray

I SEE her though memory's mellowed by years,
And she's holding a simple bouquet,
The cluster of daisies bright with her tears
For the slumbering hero in gray.

I see her again with her sad little stare
In the daisy fields nodding and gay;
And she tarries a moment to gather the fair
For her slumbering husband in gray.

The sweet wistful maid is wearier growing
But faithfully every May,
The flowers are there though she soon will be going
To her slumbering sweetheart in gray.

The shuttle whirs on! How the seasons have paced,
Two score and twelve since the day
When the first little garland was tearfully placed
By the slumbering soldier in gray.

And now like the bloom of some frail southern flower,
She has wasted and faded away.
There is no one to watch for the one tender hour
With her slumbering lover in gray.

Unless, as I hope, it is granted the true
To the bold their tribute to pay,
Then I, a lonely old brother in blue,
Will honor my brother in gray.

*A Forgotten Birthday

MY brother's birthday came today,
The first he's ever missed,
And somewhere up in Heaven
He is waiting to be kissed.

'Cause that's the way my mother does;
Without a tiny sound
She tip-toes in and wakes us up
And kisses all around.

She gives us one for every year,
With twenty for good measure;
Hugs us awful tight and says,
"You're Mommy's little treasure."

But now I guess that she forgets,
'Cause other birthdays, why,
She'd pat his curly head and laugh:
She never used to cry.

And somehow I begin to think,
Unless the angels bake,
Why I'm afraid her little boy
Won't have a birthday cake.

And then it seems to me so mean,
That, when a feller's seven,
He can't have a birthday,
Just because he's up in Heaven.

I guess when I am sent to bed,
I'll make a little prayer,
And if I say it loud enough
They'll hear it way up there.

Dear God, please give to little Jim
The things that he most misses,
A seven-candle birthday cake
And mother's birthday kisses.

*This poem has been chosen for publication in "The Poets of the future" for 1917-1918.

The Song of Falling Leaves

WE dance to the lute of an Indian maid,
We play in a strange little game,
She is the queen of crimson and jade
And Indian Summer's her name.

Like the Piper of Hamelin she needs but to play,
Ere the echo has faded to rest,
Released from the trees we dance on our way
To the land of the shimmering west.

To the land that is painted in gold and in fire
We may fare in freedom at last,
And then we shall kindle her funeral pyre;
Come! for the day's sinking fast.

On the edge of the world our maiden shall rest
With her beauty and life taken from her,
She will lie in the night, in the cold of the west,
The ashes of Indian Summer.

So come we'll away, for the maiden has fled —
She is calling to me and to you;
As soon as the Indian Summer is dead,
Then we shall be memories too.

Memory's Evergreen

A MIRACLE of gleaming green and gold
His majesty, the Christmas tree, holds sway,
Whose throne is in the youngster's heart today,
Whose cheery warmth is like the Yule of old.

What mysteries the morning may unfold
Are hidden 'neath the Christmas tree — but stay,
Tomorrow, and his splendor fades away,
He rests alone, forgotten, brown and cold.

Forgotten? Nay, for in the memory
There is a little cupboard set apart,
Where childhood's Christmas trees shall always dwell;
Nor is it cold, since there will ever be
A golden love, a warm spot in the heart,
That mellows with the year's unbroken spell.

The Nomad

THROUGH a stream of golden hours
Like a gypsy shall I wander,
To a land of pretty flowers,
To a country way out yonder,
Where the lark is always singing
Carols to his mate above,
Where the wind's forever bringing
Whispers low of peace and love.
Mine's the land of song and laughter,
Thither quickly shall I start;
All who love may follow after,
Seek me in a rosebud's heart.
There alone I'll reign supreme,
And should you ask the name of me
You'll find it in a poet's dream,
And finding, call me Fancy-Free.

Three Little Pitchers

"Little Pitchers Have Big Ears."

THREE pretty children with never a care
Nor an inkling of days to be;
Three pretty children so winsome and fair,
As they played by the changing sea:
And well I remember in those happy years,
How wonderfully wise were they;
Three little pitchers with mythical ears
That listened the live-long day.

The oldest one of the pitchers three
Was a pensive and brown-eyed maid;
Hers was the music, the song of the free,
And into its realm she strayed.
Pictures she traced, where the sea softly laves,
As if, by her untaught hand,
The wonderful music she heard from the waves
Could be fashioned on fickle sand.
I think of her eyes, with their hidden touch
Of song and freedom restrained,
And now looking back I wonder how much
The first little pitcher contained.

The next little pitcher was hardy and strong,
A brave bonnie lad and true;
He cared not a whit for the lilt of the song,
His heart heard the call of the blue.
He listened with wide opened ears to the tales
That the neighboring mariners spun;
He carved little boats and he rigged them with sails
And journeyed afar in each one.
Dreaming of conquest, dreaming of glory,
In ships of his making he stowed;
His was a sea of adventurous story
And manfully thither he rode.

The third little pitcher, the smallest of all,
Was also a brown-eyed maid.
She heard not the sea, but a far different call,
As there with the others she played.
A mother most loving was this tender Miss,
For whenever her dolly would cry,
In fancy she'd hear, and she'd soothe with a kiss,
Or she'd hush with love's lullaby.
Happy this lass, as indeed one might tell,
With mother love in its first dawn;
Hers was the garden where mothers may dwell,
Irresistibly there was she drawn.

Where are they now these pitchers three?
The first slipped away one night;
She heard the angels and now she is free
And filled with a heavenly light.
The second in court of adventure set sail,
And he mocked at the storm's bitter breath.
His heart was rejoicing, he smiled at the gale
And he laughed at the whispers of death.
The call of her babe rewarded the third,
How she kissed it and fondly caressed;
But stronger than that another was heard
And her head gently drooped to rest.

Three pretty children, in Heaven above,
Will play no more by the sea;
Three pretty pitchers, and each filled with love
As they smile in eternity.
How well I remember, in bygone years,
That wonderfully wise were they;
Yet those little pitchers with mythical ears
Are wiser, I think, today.

A Song

A SOLDIER-POET lay a-dying,
Through his dreams old songs were flying;
Songs of a yet sweeter day,
Songs his lute was wont to play
Of peace and Spring and love's fair lay.

"And now," he thought, "if I'm to die,
Why not a strain in passing by?
Why not a last and dainty song
Of Springtime brooks that trip along,
Of blossoms fresh, a flower throng?"

And then he looked him o'er the field
To see what treasure might it yield;
But man and earth were stark and mad,
And nought of love could they have had;
Thus grew the poet's heart full sad.

Thus grew the poet's eyes quite dim,
When suddenly in front of him
A pale blue flower growing wild,
Much like a trusting, simple child,
Shyly raised her head and smiled.

And lo! the dimness fled his eyes,
And in its stead came sweet surprise.
He felt the song within him stir,
As soft these words were come from her:
"Forget me not, O gentle sir!"

And happy in that last swift hour,
He whispered, as he kissed the flower,
"Sweetheart, you are my song today;
Now sets the sun, I shall away,
In peace and Spring and love's fair lay."

The Spirit of Spring

A CHARMING and rollicking throng, they advanced,
Into my study they tumbled, they danced,
Like leaves that the wind is hurrying after;
Woodland sprites, Ariels, bubbling with laughter,
They crept in my heart and softly made love.
The spring with its sweetness was most whispered of
As they perched on my ear and counseled of May,
Of daisy-fields waiting and ready for play.
Oh, they conquered my soul, it was theirs in a flash
For valiant resistance was hopeless and rash,
Since the mind may not stay when the heart would be free,
And these gay little elves were no strangers to me.
They have taught me their secret, I know why they sing,
All made into one, they're the Spirit of Spring —
Elusive, entrancing, this boldest deceiver
Will mask for the wise man and pose as a fever.

Good Friday—1918

THE priest pronounced the humble plea, "I thirst,"
And pitiless the scoffing answer came
Like gall to parching hearts, a shell of shame —
It struck the chapel, mocking as it burst.

Oh, who but infidels would dare profane
The sanctity of children as they knelt,
The anguish that the kneeling mothers felt?
What reparation could remove the stain?

But, stay! Does not the memory recall
The awful horrors of the day when first
That agonizing cry rang out, "I thirst,"
And mockers proffered Him a sponge of gall?

That day they heard the wrath of God in thunder,
They saw themselves in lasting exile thrust,
The ashes of their city lost in dust
And stone from stone their temple rent asunder.

The Gardens of France

RING down the dusk and let its folds o'erspread
The hills of France. Oh set the sombre night
With funeral tapers, gleaming silver-white
Above unbroken ranks of sleeping dead!
Across the graves where moon-ray wan is shed,
The moaning winds bewail the lovers' plight
And chant a pæan in their dismal flight;
Here son and sire rest a silent head.

Then as ye watch the moonbeams pallid dance,
Be mindful, here the flower sleeps. It fills
The hallowed ground with solaceful content
That bids these graves be called "Gardens of France" —
Aye, gardens fair! Do ye but ask the hills
And in their solemn silence find assent.

Via Crucis

A LAD, and yet he fights full well. What zest
Must kindle in his heart to stir him so!
He fain would have a "Croix de Guerre" to show
A manly trinket on a youthful breast.
More pity then, a shell need end his quest;
It seems not fair in death his cheek sha'n't glow,
It seems unkind to mock him, who, below
A wooden cross, his curly head will rest.

And yet another cross; in sorrow's name
The mother bears the heartaches of them all,
The pain and anguish that they bring. And thus we find
The trilogy, of sorrow, death and fame.
A soldier's "Via Crucis" we may call
The cross they seek, they gain and leave behind.

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